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INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION MEETINGS AT WHICH BROTHER RUSSELL WILL BE PRINCIPAL SPEAKER

FRIENDS FROM NEARBY PLACES ARE CORDIALLY INVITED.

ALBANY, N.Y., NOVEMBER 17

Morning Rally for Praise and Testimony at 10 o'clock, discourse to the interested at 7:30 p.m., in VanVechten Hall, 119 State Street.

Discourse to the Public at 3 p.m. in Harmanus Bleecker Hall, Washington Avenue.

ROCHESTER, N.Y., NOVEMBER 24

Morning meeting for Praise and Testimony, and discourse to the interested at 10:30 o'clock, Musicians' Hall, 95 Main Street, East.

Public service at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in the Temple Theatre, 35 Clinton Avenue, S.

DENVER, COLO., DECEMBER 1

Morning Rally for Praise, Prayer and Testimony, and discourse to the interested in Normal Hall, 1545 Glenarm Street, at 10:30 o'clock.

Public meetings at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. in The Auditorium, corner 14th and Curtis Streets.

CINCINNATI, OHIO, DECEMBER 8

Testimony meeting and discourse to the friends at 10:30 a.m. in The Odeon, Elm Street near Twelfth Street.

The afternoon service for the Public will be held in the Emery Auditorium, corner Canal and Walnut Streets.

BUFFALO, N.Y., DECEMBER 15

DETROIT, MICH., DECEMBER 22

LOUISVILLE, KY., DECEMBER 29

ARMAGEDDON SERMON IN NEWSPAPERS

We learn that Brother Russell's Armageddon sermon preached at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, November 3, has been published in a great many newspapers which do not publish the sermons regularly. We trust that such publishers will be encouraged to continue the service. We will be glad to receive sample copies of all such papers. Mark these "Special" on the wrapper.

When your newspaper fails to print the sermons, the proper place to write your protest is to its Editor or Publisher or both.

Brother Russell supplies the sermon regularly, and if they are not printed the Editor and Publishers are responsible.

The only way the publishers have of certainly knowing whether a sufficient proportion of their readers really appreciate the sermons, is from letters of approval when the sermons are published; or prompt letters of regret when they are discontinued.

The Fourth Volume of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES will hereafter be entitled **The Battle of Armageddon.** The Armageddon sermon will constitute an additional feature. The price is uniform with the other volumes, 35c. delivered.

ADDRESS LETTERS, ETC., TO THE SOCIETY

Money orders, drafts, checks, letters, should all be addressed to the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY (and bequests should all be made in that name), 17 Hicks Street, Brooklyn, New York.

On the envelope you may say "In care of" any certain department or individual likely to handle your matter most speedily. Make each letter complete in itself.

PRIZE PUZZLES

We still have Prize Puzzles for judicious use. Order only so many as you can use, free. Lay a few each week on hotel writing tables and in other conspicuous places, where they will come under the eye of intelligent and good people.

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BETHEL HYMNS FOR DECEMBER

After the close of the hymn the Bethel Family listens to the reading of "My Vow Unto the Lord," then joins in prayer. At the breakfast table the MANNA text is considered. Hymns for December follow: (1) 273; (2) 109; (3) 332; (4) 14; (5) 259; (6) 12; (7) 120; (8) 170; (9) 167; (10) 152; (11) 208; (12) 105; (13) 305; (14) 288; (15) 67; (16) 101; (17) 93; (18) 43; (19) 7; (20) 144; (21) 53; (22) 145; (23) 4; (24) 273; (25) 16; (26) 243; (27) 195; (28) 255; (29) 176; (30) 85; (31) 249.

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MEAN CHRISTIANS AND NOBLE UNBELIEVERS

"Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."--`**1 Cor. 1:26**`.

SURELY NONE will dispute the statement that there are noble characters amongst unbelievers as well as amongst Christians; neither will any one of experience dispute that there are mean people amongst Christians as well as amongst the worldly. But how shall we account for this? Should we not reasonably expect that the noble principles of true Christianity would attract all of the best minds of the world, and rather repel the meaner disposition? Should we not expect that the doctrines of Christ, the spirit of His teachings--meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love--would attract all who have sympathy with these qualities, hence all of the nobleminded of the world? And should we not likewise expect that since the Scriptures and the Spirit of the Lord condemn all anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, backbitings, evil speakings, impurities, etc., all those who have sympathy with such works of the flesh and of the Devil would be repelled by the Gospel of Christ?

Whatever the tendency of our mental philosophy on the subject, the facts of the case prove to us that proportionately a larger number of the world's nobleminded children reject the Lord and His Gospel, and that a larger proportion of the world's ignoble children accept the Gospel of Christ. The still more interesting and perplexing question therefore is, How shall we account for this very peculiar condition which seems contrary to all and every expectation?

We account for it along the lines of our Lord's statement, that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (`Matt. 9:13`.) True, "There is none righteous, no, not one...All have sinned and come short of the glory of

God" (`Rom. 3:10,23`); the fall of Father Adam involved every one of his posterity; hence all are sinners and all need the grace of God in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. But those who find themselves morally and intellectually less fallen than some of their neighbors are inclined to a self-righteous feeling, even though they would disclaim perfection. They are, therefore, less inclined to acknowledge themselves to be **nothing,** unworthy of Divine favor, to bow themselves in the dust at the foot of the cross, and to receive, as an unmerited gift of God, the boon of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE NEED OF THE GOOD PHYSICIAN NOT REALIZED

This class feel that some of the more degraded of the race need Divine pity and forgiveness, and are glad that God has compassion for these, and will help them; but somehow they feel that they do not need the imputed Robe of Christ's Righteousness to cover them; that they are so respectable that if God accepts any one to a future life, He will surely not exclude them. They look about them and compare themselves with Christians, and often with a large degree of complacency assure themselves that their ideas of right and wrong and of moral responsibility, and of benevolence, etc., are higher, nobler, better than those of professed Christians. They say to themselves, "God is just; and while I am not perfect, I am a great deal better than the majority of Christians, and I am sure, therefore, that God in **justice** will take as much care of me as He will of others, who I see are inferior to me in some of the good qualities of heart and mind." Like the Pharisee of old, they thank God that they are not as other men; and they neglect the only "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."--`Acts 4:12`.

The class which we are describing is a numerous class, more numerous than many persons would suppose until they reflect upon the subject; and it includes

many, far from hypocritical, who have never understood the Gospel. Several of the Presidents of the United States have been men of this class--reverent toward religion, moral in their course of life, just in their dealings; for instance, Lincoln and Grant, whom we mention merely as examples of a class. Besides, many properly of this class are either Church attendants or Church members. They appreciate the fact that directly or indirectly the moral uplift of civilization is associated with Christianity, and are pleased to take their stand on the moral and popular side, though they have never accepted, at the hands of Divine grace, the forgiveness of sins through faith in the precious blood of Christ.

We see their difficulty; it is that they do not recognize that the Lord is dealing upon principles of **strict justice and law.** Divine Law and Justice declare that all imperfection is contrary to God, that God's work was perfect originally in Adam, and that He can never accept to harmony with Himself anything that is imperfect. They fail to see that under this Law, whoever is guilty in that which is **least,** is nevertheless, **guilty;** and comes under

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the same death penalty with him who is guilty of many and more serious offenses.

Since, then, all men are imperfect--none absolutely righteous--the one sentence of death includes **every member** of the human family; and there is no door of escape from death, no door of entrance into life, except the one which God has provided--Christ Jesus, the Righteous, who became man's Redeemer by the sacrifice of Himself. He who fails to go through this door never attains to life, however much he may strive against sin, and however closely he may approach the door. Only passage **through the door** can gain an entrance into eternal life.

"I am the door; by Me if any man **enter in,** he shall be saved." "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God [the sentence of death] abideth on him."--`John 10:9`; `3:36`.

The same philosophy of the subject shows to us **why** it is that a proportionately larger number of the world's ignoble than of its noble children come to Christ. Only those who feel that they are sinners, who feel that they need relief from sin, appreciate the offer of forgiveness. Only the sick, who realize that they are sick, feel the need of the Great Physician. Many indeed seek the Lord's grace because they realize to some extent their own fallen, degraded condition, and that they are **meaner people than others;** only this seems to awaken them to a realization of their position; only this leads them to cry out, "Have **mercy** upon me, Thou Son of David." And this realization of personal **unworthiness** of the Divine favor is necessary to all who would accept the grace of God on the only conditions upon which it is offered.

CONTINUANCE IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST CONDITIONAL

Having thus found the philosophical basis of our subject, we proceed to inquire concerning the result. What is the legitimate result of acceptance of Christ? We answer, The inevitable result of a proper acceptance of Christ must be **moral uplifting;** for the condition upon which Christ receives any one is, that he desires not only to be forgiven the sins that are **past,** but also to forsake sin for the **future.**

The lower one may be in the scale of morality, the more radical will the change eventually be; but the less proportionately will he realize at the beginning of his conversion all the steps of purification of word and thought and act, which lie before him in the Christian pathway. He will at first think of the reform of merely the grosser manifestations of sin; but step by step and lesson by lesson

he will be instructed by the Great Teacher, and brought onward in knowledge and in appreciation and in character upbuilding, if he continue in the School of Christ.

The requirement of the Great Teacher, through the Apostle, is that those who come unto Him, in full consecration, after being accepted on the ground of faith, must at once begin to "put away all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord." (`2 Cor. 7:1`.) Whoever will not make the attempt to do this will not be continued in the School of Christ; for he has not Christ's Spirit, and not having His Spirit he is **"none of His."** "Whosoever practices sin [knowingly, willingly] is of the devil." (`I John 3:8`.) Nevertheless, it may require years of schooling and discipline under the Great Teacher before some of those who were deeply sunken in the mire of sin and selfishness, and many consequent meannesses of disposition, become even moderately or passably good, noble characters.

Character is more like the oak than like the mushroom; it requires time for its development. Yet as the oak might be quickly killed with an axe, so even a strong character might be quickly undermined, prostrated, overthrown by sin. In other words, **upward development** is **slow,** but **downward tendencies** may take effect **rapidly,** if permitted. Consequently, many Christians can see that while the religion of Christ has done much to help them and their friends out of the miry clay of sin, and to put them on the Rock, Christ Jesus, and has cleansed them of many of the defilements of the flesh, and of its meannesses of disposition, yet perhaps after ten, twenty or forty years of such discipline and perseverance, they may with surprise behold some unbeliever whom they must acknowledge to be their equal in moral probity, uprightness or generosity.

THE LAW OF HEREDITY INVOLVED

The question arises, How is this? We answer, that as moral **deflection** affects the children to the third and fourth generation, so moral **attainments** may affect the children to several generations. Hence not only do parents who have been upright and God-fearing, who have endeavored to cultivate in themselves the graces of the Spirit, benefit themselves, and approach more nearly than at first to the grand standard of perfection, but their children will be born with **better natural** qualifications, as well as under conditions more favorable to righteousness and nobility of soul. For the **heart** attainments of the parents are reflected in the physical condition of their children.

And this, by the way, proves conclusively that many professedly pious parents are less noble at heart than we could have hoped; for, if during the period of conception and gestation, parental thoughts, feelings, sentiments had been cultivated along the lines of nobility, purity, holiness, reverence, benevolence, justice and love, their children would show it; and results would be blessed both to the children and the parents. The **natural** qualities of the child were **willed** to it before its birth, chiefly by the mother; and the **mother's ideals** were considerably those of the **father,** if they were well mated.

Christian parents should awake to their responsibilities in the exercise of their procreative powers entrusted to them by the Almighty. It is a disgrace to our civilization that so many in civilized lands are **low-born,** even amongst those who recognize the laws of heredity and who carefully guard the breeding of their cattle and sheep and dogs and horses. It must be that the influence of the parental **mind** upon posterity is not recognized. Let these thoughts not only guard parents in respect to future offspring, but also make them very patient and painstaking with young children, when attempting to train out of them blemishes of character which they helped to implant. The first duty of a parent to his child is to give him the most favorable start in life within his power.

If children of Christian parents, favorably bred, also become Christians, and begin a warfare in their own hearts against moral uncleanness and sin, and against all the mean and selfish propensities of the fallen nature, they may, by the grace of God, attain to a moral position higher than that attained by their parents, through putting into practise the instructions of the Great Teacher.

But here comes in another side of the question. God does not accept the children of believers on account of parental faith, beyond the **period of their minority.** As soon as years of accountability have been reached, a personal covenant with the Lord is required, if they would be His in any special sense; otherwise they are recognized

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as being of the world and under its condemnation, and not under the justification which extends only to believers and their minor children. (`I Cor. 7:14`.) God makes the entrance into His family and School an **individual** matter.

And here we find the secret of how it comes that some of the noblest men of the world are not the Lord's people. They are the children of those whose feet have been lifted out of the miry clay of sin. They have inherited through their parents a share in the uplifting which the teaching of Christ brought into the world, amongst those who follow His teaching. Thus we see that Infidelity has nothing to boast of in its noblest sons, for what they have that is noble and great came generally through the belief, the faith, of their ancestors.

On the contrary, the tendency of unbelief is toward sin and degradation. It may not come in one generation, or it may. The son of noble Christian parents, who has inherited a more noble mind than the masses, may **maintain** that mind to

some extent through life; and if he take pride in his morality he may, at least on the surface, keep up a good appearance, and may transmit some of it to his posterity. But eventually selfishness will undermine and destroy nobility; and we may as surely expect a **degradation** in the posterity of such who do not receive Christ, as we may expect an **advancement** on the part of all who accept the Savior.

ILLUSTRATED IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

The general operation of this law can be appreciated only as we look out over a grand scope of territory and over centuries of time. As we look back to the days of our Lord and the Apostles, we find that the Gospel was laid hold upon by the very class that we have here described --the publicans and sinners, the lower classes-- while it was rejected by the worldly-wise, the hypocritical and the pharisaical, who were morally and intellectually the superior class, and who on this very account rejected Christ--not feeling their need of a Savior. Looking intently at the Gospel Church, with its lowly beginning, in the poorest class, we find that whoever entered the School of Christ and was taught of Him was uplifted by obedience to that Teacher.

This higher teaching of the Master became the standard among His followers. They learned that, as the Lord's people, they should not only love one another, but should sympathetically love even those who hated them, who maligned them and who persecuted them, saying all manner of evil against them falsely for Christ's sake; and that Divine blessing rested upon the meek, the patient, the humble, the peacemakers; and that the sum of all the graces is love. We find the very same teaching coming from the humble fishermen and publicans who accepted Him, and whom He sent forth as the Apostles of His grace.

For instance, we find the Apostle Peter saying, "Add to your faith knowledge,

self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love." (`2 Pet. 1:5-8`.) We find the Apostle John saying, "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath **seen,** how can he love God, whom he hath **not seen?"** (`I John 4:20`.) We find the Apostle James saying that all who are taught of the Lord should "show out of a good conversation [life, conduct] his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not." "Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up. Speak not evil one of another, brethren." "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?"-- `James 3:13,14`; `4:7,10,11`; `2:5`.

We hear the Apostle Paul, who once was of the nobler, the Pharisee class, giving utterance to the same truth, and in all humility acknowledging that "there is none righteous, no, **not one."** (`Rom. 3:10`.) He explains that only as we accept Christ have we the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation with the Father; that, having put on Christ, we should be New Creatures in Him; that old things should be past and gone forever, and that we should walk henceforth in newness of life, not according to the will of the flesh, but according to the purpose of the Lord. Hear him exhorting those who have taken the **name** of Christ, assuring them that they must also take His **Spirit,** or disposition, and have the same mind [disposition] which was also in Christ Jesus, our Lord-- a mind in opposition to sin and meanness and selfishness, but in harmony with truth, goodness, purity, benevolence and love.

And the Apostle explains this, saying: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; love is the fulfilling of the Law"; "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly." "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts

thereof." "Recompense no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."-- `Rom. 13:10,12-14`; `12:17-20`.

St. Paul explained in particular the love which is the essence of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and which all followers of the Lord must have if they would continue to be His, saying: "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth."--`I Cor. 13:4-8`.

"THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD IS SURE, MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE"

It would be impossible for any class of people, however mentally and morally degraded they might be, to receive such instructions into good and honest hearts, without being uplifted by them, made more noble, more Christlike, more Godlike. It does not surprise us, therefore, to find that even in the first century, the Lord's people became noted for their high principles and morality, insomuch that the masses of the people "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus and learned of Him."--`Acts 4:13`.

Then we see how the Adversary corrupted the Truth from the simplicity in which it was presented by the Lord and the Apostles. We see forms and ceremonies, genuflections and masses, bondage to creeds and theories of men,

taking the place of the pure Gospel of Christ; and we note the result, that in proportion as the teachings of Christ were ignored, in the same proportion superstition came in, and the Spirit of Christ was lacking.

Nevertheless, with all the corruption which came into the world with the second century, there was a sufficiency of the true spirit intermixed with the error to work a vast reformation in the savages of Europe, and to bring

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them into a condition of civilization higher than that of the rest of the world. And when in the Divine providence the Reformation movement was inaugurated, it lifted the same class of people immeasurably higher in moral tone. It restored much of the primitive purity of Christianity and of the Spirit of Christ; and in proportion as the Word of God has been free amongst the people, and in proportion as they have received it gladly and have permitted its ennobling sentiments to germinate in their hearts and bring forth its fruitage, in this proportion we have seen the peoples which came under the direct influence of the Reformation lifted still higher than the remainder of the world.

THE WASHED SOW STILL CRAVES THE MIRE

In all of this we observe the principle at first set forth; namely, that the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of Truth, the spirit of righteousness from the Word of the Lord, is the civilizing, enlightening and ennobling influence which has wrought the marvelous changes of this Christian Era and especially of this last century. Papacy and sectarianism hindered, but could not thwart, its influence. It still continues to take hold on the **lower classes** of society, and lifts them up; and the tendency is still observable, that those who are already lifted up are the less likely to be appreciative of the Divine goodness. Thus it is that not many

great, not many learned, not many wise, according to the course of this world, hath God chosen; but the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom.

The broader and clearer our view of the situation, the more shall we be able to sympathize with those of our brethren in Christ who by nature are mean, ignoble, selfish, lacking in benevolence of thought, word and conduct. When we realize that God has accepted them--not because of their good and noble character, but because they admit its deficiencies and because they desire to become reformed--transformed, by the renewing of their minds--then all who have the Lord's mind or Spirit will likewise receive them.

In proportion as we have the mind of Christ, the holy mind, we shall view others from the Divine standpoint of sympathy for their weaknesses and ignoble qualities; and instead of condemning them, spurning them, and cutting their acquaintance because they do not come up to the noblest standards, we shall desire all the more to help them up, and shall seek kindly to point out to them the matters which they do not clearly see. We shall be patient with them as we see them striving to overcome. We shall realize that they contend against a mental disease which they have to some extent inherited, and which can only gradually be eradicated.

From this standpoint we shall learn to view them and to think of them, not according to their flesh, not according to their natural tendencies and dispositions, but according to the spirit, according to the intentions of their minds, according to their covenant with the Lord. Thus, as the Apostle declares, we know each other no longer after the flesh, but after the spirit.--`2 Cor. 5:16`.

Each one who has accepted God's grace, and become a partaker of the spirit of

holiness, and is striving against sin in all its forms--in thought and word and conduct--all such are striving for the grand perfection of character of which our dear Redeemer is the only perfect illustration. All such profess themselves **imperfect copies** of God's dear Son and seek to grow in His likeness. All such are seeking to put away all the works of the flesh and the devil--not only the grosser evils (murder, theft, etc.), but also the more common elements of an ignoble, perverted nature--anger, malice, hatred, strife, etc. And all these are seeking to put on more and more the complete armor of God, to resist sin, and to cultivate in themselves the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus--meekness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love.

"SEE THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER"

Let us (Christians), then, take a broader view of matters, and especially of all who have named the name of Christ, and who give any evidence of seeking to walk in His footsteps. Let our love for them cover, not only the little, trifling blemishes and differences from ourselves, but let it also cover a multitude of imperfections in the flesh, so long as we see that their hearts are loyal to the Lord, and that they are seeking to walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit; so long as they profess to be seeking to get rid of the meanness and selfishness and littleness of the fallen nature, and to cultivate in themselves the nobility of character which belongs to perfect manhood, the image of the Divine nature.

And let each one who has taken the name of Christ be on the lookout to apprehend and eradicate every trace of the meanness, selfishness, rudeness, dishonesty, which still cling to us as members of the fallen race, and are become so much a part of us that we are often disposed to call them **natural** traits. Let us remember that, even if our Lord and our brethren in Christ overlook these blemishes (rightly distinguishing between the "New Creature in Christ" and these contrary elements of our old nature reckoned dead), yet the

world cannot so distinguish and will charge to the **cause of Christ** all the faults and imperfections they see in His professed followers. Thus that Holy Name is profaned among the Gentiles, daily, by many.

Let us remember too, that ill nature cannot be transformed into good nature in a day. Transformation of mind, speech and conduct requires patience and perseverance; but it can be accomplished by those who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit and who are obedient to the commands of the Great Teacher. "See that ye refuse not [obedience to] Him that speaketh" from Heaven. (`Heb. 12:25`.) Whoever neglects His teachings, neglects the great salvation offered during this Gospel Age; for none will be among the Elect except those who in their hearts at least are noble, true and good--conformed to the image of God's dear Son.--`Rom. 8:29`.

If all could fully realize the influence of our minds over our own bodies, as well as their less direct influence over the minds and bodies of others, a great **Thought Reform Movement** would speedily begin in the world; and especially amongst God's consecrated people. Surely such should co-operate with the inspired prayer--"Create in me a **clean** heart [will], O God; and renew a right spirit [disposition] within me...Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."--`Psa. 51:10,13`.

May the love of God be more and more shed abroad in our hearts, and our consciences be always tender, and may we ever abstain from the appearance of evil. May we be enabled at all times to be circumspect in our conversation, and to scrutinize our thoughts and words and doings, to the intent that we may ever be ready and able to serve our Heavenly Father and His dear flock, the "Feet" members of the Body of Christ!

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Grudge no loving word, my brother,
     As along through life you go,
To the ones who journey with you;
     If you love them, tell them so.
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IN DREAMLESS SLEEP DEAD AWAIT CHRIST'S RETURN

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."-- `John 14:3`**.**

THE ERROR OF supposing that men are alive when they are dead lies close to the foundation of every theological error the world over. We have all erred in taking the guess of Plato instead of the Word of God, and we can get rid of our difficulties and theological entanglements only by retracing our steps. Notwithstanding all that we have said and written, calling attention to the words of the Scriptures, the question frequently arises, Do you mean to tell us that our friends do not go to Heaven immediately when they die?

That is exactly what we are endeavoring to demonstrate to be the teaching of the Bible. The Bible alone, of all religious books, teaches that a dead man is **dead,** and knows **nothing,** and that his only hope is in the Divine arrangement through Christ, by a resurrection of the dead--"both of the just and of the unjust."--`Acts 24:15`.

When we remember that, according to nearly all the religious creeds and

theories of the world, 999 out of every thousand pass immediately at death into most horrible sufferings, one would think that all would be glad to promptly accept the Bible testimony, that death is a dreamless sleep until the resurrection awakening. Why anyone should prefer to think of his friends and neighbors and the heathen millions as suffering torture, rather

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than to think of them as being asleep, is beyond our comprehension.

The fact probably is that selfishness has such a hold upon the masses that they care and think little respecting others than their near relatives and friends; and the same selfishness inclines them, with infatuation, to believe that they and their relatives, though no better than the rest of mankind, are special favorites of Heaven, and will be granted the reward of the saints, however unsaintly their lives may have been. Some one has suggested that the ideal prayer for such is:
"God bless me and my wife,
My son John and his wife;
Us four, and no more."

In harmony with this we find that when death invades a family circle this selfish egotism assumes that the deceased is acceptable to God as a saint, and wafted immediately to heavenly bliss--regardless of how unsaintly had been the life and how little of the spirit of Christ was ever manifested. The deception is reinforced by the Christian minister called to conduct the funeral service. Whatever he may read from the Bible to the effect that, if there be no resurrection, they that have fallen asleep have perished, his sermon is sure to give the inference that the deceased needs no resurrection, because he has not died, but has merely been transferred from a lower plane of life to a higher one.

Proof of this is not given and not asked. The proof is not given because there is no Scriptural proof to give. It is not asked because the people **are not sufficiently intelligent on religious subjects** to demand a reason and a proof for what is presented to them. The remedy for all this will come when we become more intelligent, more reasoning. No minister of Christ should be abashed to be asked the reason for his faith. St. Peter exhorted that every Christian should be so thoroughly informed respecting the Divine Message as to be able to give a reason to whoever would ask concerning his own faith and his presentations to others.

Here note our text. In it the Master says not a word about our going to Him, but quite the contrary--that he will come again and receive us unto Himself. This is in full accord with the teachings of the Apostles. Do they not tell that at the second coming of Christ the resurrection of the Church will be the first item in order; that then that which was sown in weakness will be raised in power; that sown in dishonor will be raised in glory; that sown an animal body will be raised a spirit body; and that so we shall ever be with the Lord? Do they not tell us that this will be an instantaneous change? Is it not styled an awakening from the sleep of death?

Hearken to St. Paul: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (seventh trumpet); for the trumpet shall sound," "and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught away together to a meeting with the Lord in the air." (`I Cor. 15:51,52`; `I Thess. 4:16,17`.) How plain, how simple! That will be the first meeting of the Church with her Lord. All of her members dying before that time will "sleep," while those dying since that time will not need to sleep and wait for the glorious change. But, says one, does not the second coming of Christ take place whenever His holy ones die? Does He not immediately come to receive them

unto Himself?

Surely only a very lame theory could seek to bolster itself up by such a perversion of the Scriptures. If Christ were to come every time one of His saintly ones dies, would it not mean **many comings** instead of merely **a second coming?** And even if His faithful were very few indeed, does it not seem that this would keep the Redeemer busy coming and departing every few minutes?

Only crass ignorance of the Bible could excuse any such misapplication of its teachings. Not merely one statement of the Scriptures bears upon this subject, but hundreds of statements of Scripture, by Jesus and the Apostles; and all these contradict any such thought.

"NO MAN HATH ASCENDED TO HEAVEN"

Hearken to Jesus' words, "No man hath ascended up to Heaven." (`John 3:13`.) Only the Son of Man has ever been in heaven. He has ascended up where He was before, with additional glory and honor. He is now preparing a place for His Bride class and preparing the Bride class for the place--the place of honor at His own right hand. He is overseeing her experiences and causing all things to work together for her good, that she at His Second Coming may be prepared and be accepted as His Bride and granted a share in His glory, honor and immortality.

It is in full harmony with this that a little later on the Great Teacher declared that all the dead are in the grave, and that at His second advent He will first call forth His faithful ones to the perfection of life; and later will call forth the remainder of mankind, not as yet found worthy of life, that they may have an opportunity, a testing as respects their worthiness or unworthiness of everlasting life on the human plane.

Hear His assurance again respecting His faithful ones--that they shall share in **His** resurrection, the Chief Resurrection, to glory, honor, immortality, on the spirit plane. He said, "Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the First Resurrection; they shall be priests unto God and Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."--`Rev. 20:6`.

Be it noted that in all these assurances the Church is spoken of as a class, all of whom will enter into glory

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together, at Christ's second coming, and not separately, as each may die. True, each has an individual trial or testing to determine whether or not he or she will be accounted worthy, or fitted for a place in the glorious Body of Christ, in the glorious Bride company, but the statement is repeatedly made that we shall be **glorified together,** that we shall have part in the one resurrection.

"DAVID NOT ASCENDED TO HEAVEN"

In full accord with all the foregoing is St. Peter's statement on the Day of Pentecost: "For David is not ascended into the heavens"; "his sepulchre is with us unto this day." (`Acts 2:34,29`.) St. Peter's words imply that if King David had ascended to Heaven he would have no sepulchre on earth. Similarly, we might say of all of the Prophets, and of all other persons that, if once they ascended to the heavenly plane, they could not be said to have any sepulchre on earth, for the very thought connected with the word **sepulchre** is that of a personality awaiting a resurrection, awaiting deliverance from the state and condition of death. So the Scriptures always refer, not to a resurrection of the living, which would be an absurdity, but to a resurrection of the dead.

Note the connection in which the Apostle Peter uses this expression: "David is not ascended into the heavens." He had just called attention to the fact that David prophesied of the resurrection of Jesus. In the prophecy he personated Jesus, and said, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol (Hades), nor suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." (`V. 27`.) St. Peter argues that this was not true of David, that he did see corruption, that his soul **was** left in Sheol, and is still left there, and will not be reclaimed until Messiah, in the resurrection morning, shall call him forth.

"BE WITH ME IN PARADISE"

But, says some one, did not the dying thief go with Jesus to Paradise the very day in which they both died? And if so, does not this prove that all in harmony with God go to heaven when they die, whatever may be the condition of others in death?

No, we have made a stupid blunder and misinterpretation of our Redeemer's dying words to the thief. The wrong thought being in our minds we misinterpreted in harmony therewith. And our interpretation has done an immense amount of harm. Thousands of people have been encouraged to continue a life of sin, trusting that with their dying breath they may have the opportunity of saying, "God be merciful to me," and then be immediately ushered into glory, honor and immortality, as joint-heirs with the Savior, and in as honorable a station as those who "have fought to win the prize, and sailed through bloody seas" of trial and persecution and self-denial.

What a travesty of Justice to suppose such an application of this principle! For instance, two ungodly persons quarrel. Both draw revolvers and fire; one dies instantly; the other, the worse of the two, lives a moment, in which he says,

"God, be merciful to me." Then, theoretically, he passes into glory, while his victim, not having the opportunity for a cry for mercy, we are told by the same theory, is doomed to endless torture.

Note the circumstance. (`Luke 23:39-43`.) Jesus hung between two thieves, one of whom joined with the multitude in railing at Him as an imposter, crying out, "Yes, if you be the Christ, save yourself and us from death." The other, of better heart, honestly admitted his own guilt and the guilt of his comrade, but defended Jesus, declaring that He was innocent. Following this, he addresses Jesus. We paraphrase his words: "Lord, I have defended you against an unjust attack; remember this poor thief if you ever have an opportunity to do a kindness to me in return. I heard you before Pilate say that you have a Kingdom, but not of this Age; some heavenly Kingdom, I therefore presume. I know little about such matters, but from what I have seen of you I can well surmise you King of such a Kingdom. My request is, 'Remember me, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.'"

To this Jesus replied, "Verily, verily (so be it, so be it, as you have asked)--verily, I say unto thee this day (this dark day, in which it would appear that I have not a friend in Heaven or on earth--this dark day in which

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I am crucified as a malefactor, a falsifier and a blasphemer --I say unto thee this day), thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

On the day of their dying all three went to Hades, to Sheol, to the tomb, to the state of the dead. The two thieves still remain there, and are amongst those mentioned by the Prophet Daniel when he refers to those "who sleep in the dust of the earth," who will come forth in the resurrection morning. (`Daniel 12:2`.)

But Jesus arose from Sheol, from Hades, from the tomb, from the state of death, on the third day. He had not been to Paradise, for Paradise is not even yet in existence. He had not been to Heaven, for He had been **dead.** Let us hear His own words to Mary on the morning of His resurrection: "I have not yet ascended***to My Father, and your Father, to My God, and your God." (`John 20:17`.) Could anything be plainer, simpler, more harmonious?

"DEPART AND BE WITH CHRIST"

Ah, says one, I have great faith in St. Paul, and I remember his words: "I am in a strait between two things: having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." (`Phil. 1:23`.) If St. Paul expected to depart and be with Christ, why is it not reasonable to suppose that he did so, and that all others, at least of the saintly, at death so depart and pass at once into the presence and fellowship of Jesus?

Yet such a misunderstanding of St. Paul's words and thoughts are excusable in view of the general trend of Christian thought on this subject for centuries, and in view of the error made in this case by the translators. We are not faulting the translators, because they had the erroneous thought firmly embedded in their minds and presumably were trying to make the Apostle here say what they conscientiously thought he ought to say.

But what we are interested in knowing is, What **did he say** on the subject?

Let us read the Apostle's words critically. He was in a strait between two things--whether he would prefer to live and suffer further for the Truth's sake, and assist the brethren, or whether he would prefer to die and rest from his labors. Between these two positions he had no choice. But there was a third thing--and if this had been a possibility he would have had no difficulty in

deciding --he had a real, positive desire respecting it; neither of the things which were possible to him would have stood in comparison at all, this third thing would have been so desirable.

Now what was this third thing? It was not to live and suffer and help the brethren, nor was it to die and be at rest from his labors. The third thing, according to a literal translation, is expressed thus: "I have a desire for the **returning,** and being with Christ, which is far better" --far better than either living under the present trying conditions or dying, sleeping, resting and waiting for the Kingdom.

But, says one, by what authority do you render the

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word **depart** by a word of very opposite meaning, namely **return.** We answer that we give this rendering on the authority of the Greek text. The Greek word is **analusai;** it is found in one other place in the Bible, and there it is rendered **return.** In this other case there can be no question as to the proper translation.--See `Luke 12:36`.

Let us, then, dear fellow-Christians, turn from the follies of the Dark Ages and take the inspired words of Jesus, the Apostles and Prophets, and have, indeed, "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness," in respect to the understanding of the Heavenly Father's Program. Thus we will find fulfilled in us more and more the Master's prayer: "Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth."

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CONSECRATION THE NORMAL ATTITUDE FOR GOD'S INTELLIGENT CREATURES

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."--`**1 Cor. 2:14**`.

BY THE EXPRESSION "natural man" we understand the Scriptures to mean all who have not experienced a change of nature in the begetting of the Holy Spirit. All mankind, including Adam himself, are natural men. Even a perfect human being cannot receive the deep spiritual truths which God reveals to His consecrated children through the Holy Spirit.

Whoever is desirous of being in harmony with God and is endeavoring to become so, even though he be not justified, is looking forward to full justification. If he continue in this course, he will eventually become justified--if not at the present time, then during Messiah's reign. But in this Age, none can attain to full justification except by faith in the blood of Christ, which leads its possessor to make a complete consecration of himself to God, by the intervention of our Lord Jesus as Advocate, who imputes to him a sufficiency of His merit to make up for his deficiency.

Since our Lord imputes His merit only to those who make a full consecration of themselves, one who merely believes in the Savior and wishes to do right, cannot at this time enter into full peace with God. He receives only a **measure** of peace and justification; for those alone who are fully absolved from sin and presented by the Advocate can be accepted by the Father--these alone are fully

justified in the Father's sight.

Some speak of the **sanctified** as if these were no longer **justified.** The fact is that only the sanctified can be said to be fully justified; and they must maintain their justification with God, else they could never make their calling and election sure.

It is very important to observe the sharp outlines and distinctions which the Scriptures establish. According to these outlines, the Holy Spirit is given only in a very special manner, during a very special Age, for a very special purpose. The distinction is absolute and positive in every sense of the word. Only those begotten of the Father have His Spirit, which is the Spirit of the Son; and those alone who have that Spirit are begotten to the new nature.

GOOD TRAITS OF CHARACTER NOT A PROOF OF CONSECRATION

In times past we did not clearly distinguish the Lord's people from the world. Whenever we met a man with kind, gentle manners, whether an infidel, a Brahman, a Mohammedan, a Presbyterian, a Methodist or merely one of the world, we said to ourself, "Here is a man who has the **Spirit** of the Lord." Then, we did not know what we were talking about; now, we can recognize the difference. We are certainly glad to acknowledge good traits of character in heathen as well as Christians, but we are not to accept gentleness and kindness of manner as evidence that their possessor has the Holy Spirit.

We have all seen people who have very proper sentiments of justice on some subjects, who are yet manifestly not God's people, begotten of the Holy Spirit. Such persons are usually fine characters. Nevertheless, their conscientiousness causes them to admit that they are sinners and have need of Divine forgiveness.

We are glad that there are such people, and we should encourage rather than discourage them.

The explanation of this condition of affairs is that these fine characters are not so fallen as some others. God made man in His own image and likeness. With the fall of man came the impairment of that godlike disposition, but the image of God is not altogether lost. For our part, we wish to show that our Redeemer is the only channel for that forgiveness, the need of which they recognize, and that the only condition of their full acceptance with God is the entire consecration of all that they possess to the service of the Lord.

On one occasion our Lord said, "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him." (`John 6:44`.) No one will receive the Holy Spirit **without having been drawn** to Christ, but some may be **drawn** without **receiving the Holy Spirit.** Possibly in these persons that endowment which God gave to Adam and pronounced "very good" has been less impaired by the fall than it has been in others. Such naturally desire to have God's approval and the blessings which He is willing to give to those who seek Him.

Having this disposition, such persons are said to be drawn of God. But the Father points them to the Son, through the knowledge of simple truths. For instance, they may be influenced through hearing a hymn sung; such as,
"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

These words contain the truth of God to any one who is in a right condition of heart, and are a very valuable hint as to the way to approach God. If those who are seeking to know God desire to inquire further on the subject, they will

probably be led to consult with some of the children of God.

Upon the inquiry of those under the conviction of sin as to what must be done to be saved, we tell them, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (`Acts 16:31`.) Make a full consecration of your life unto God, and thus you may become a son of God. If any one is obedient to the drawing, the next step for him to take is to say, "I give myself to the Lord and trust Him fully, for I realize how unworthy I am."

The course which we are describing is that which one must follow in order to be acceptable to God. But first of all, he must desire to approach the Lord. If we should find any one who is totally depraved, there would be no use to attempt to draw such a one toward righteousness,

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Truth and God. Even those who have the right attitude of mind may not be equally impressed at all times. It may be that some circumstance must awaken them to the need of consecration before they will take the step which will enable them to become sons of God.--`Rom. 12:1,2`.

THE HIGH CALLING NOT FOR ALL

No man, however, takes this step of consecration unless he is called of God. There must be the call, or invitation, as there was with Aaron and with our Lord Jesus Christ. (`Heb. 5:4,5`.) This call comes through the proclamation of the Gospel. Each must hear for himself before he can accept. "And how shall they **hear** without a **preacher?"** (`Rom. 10:14`.) So then, it is for God to begin the work with the unjustified by drawing them to Christ for justification; and it is for our Lord Jesus Christ to continue this work with the consecrated.

Furthermore, it is the privilege of all who come into God's family to proclaim these truths to others, to set forth the terms by which those who receive the call may accept it, while still "it is called today," before this Age of sacrifice ends.--`Heb. 4:7`; `2 Cor. 6:2`.

None come to God in this Gospel Age except those who make a sacrifice. Others may **turn** toward God; they may **look** toward God; they may be converted from a wicked life to a better one. But none except the class who are adopted into God's family are begotten of the Holy Spirit. The invitation of this Age is NOT an invitation to do **the best one can;** we are all called in the **one hope** of our calling. (`Eph. 4:4`.) "Gather My saints together unto Me, saith the Lord, those who have made a Covenant with Me by **sacrifice."**--`Psa. 50:5`.

It is good not to do wrong. But more than a righteous life is required of those who would be **sons of God. Consecration** has **always** been proper; it is the **normal attitude** for all of God's intelligent creatures. The Creator is the One to whom all are properly under obligations for every blessing which they enjoy; and heart, mind, tongue and hand should be ready for consecration to do the Father's will. Whether angels or men or New Creatures in Christ --all should be in this attitude.

Since consecration is the only reasonable attitude, then, when the one hundred and forty-four thousand of the Elect Church shall have passed their testing it will still be appropriate for God to permit people to consecrate, and to be pleased with their consecration. Therefore, we may expect that, in the end of the reign of Christ, all the worthy ones shall have made consecration to God. It was thus in the Jewish Age, although there was no "high calling" then, nor privilege to understand the deep things of God.

The privilege of becoming joint-heirs with Christ will end as soon as the Elect number is completed. During the thousand years of Christ's reign, those who consecrate will come to understand all human things; but not being begotten of the Holy Spirit, they cannot understand the things of the Spirit.

KNOWLEDGE OF DEEP THINGS A GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT

We believe that there are some now living, perhaps a good many, who are consecrated to God and whose consecration has been accepted, but who are not in the light of Present Truth. This number may include some who are what the Scriptures term "babes" in Christ, and others to whom the Scriptures refer as the "great multitude." (`Heb. 5:12-14`; `I Pet. 2:2`; `Rev. 7:9`.) The "foolish virgin" class are probably in very large number all around us. The fact that there are some of these in Babylon seems to be indicated by the command, "Come out of her, My people." (`Rev. 18:4`.) If they are in Babylon, their presence there shows that they are not yet well developed; and if they are God's people, they are not enjoying the full strength of Present Truth, although Spirit-begotten.

This fact does not signify that they may not receive Present Truth. On the contrary, we think it quite likely that some may be helped out of Babylon and into a better understanding of the Divine Plan; for some of the babes may be strengthened, built up, to a full appreciation of the things of the Spirit. We are to have in mind the fact that God has so arranged that "the deep things of God" cannot be known instantaneously; this knowledge comes gradually as an evidence of faithfulness to God.

Those who have not yet learned fully to reverence God and who have not yet made progress in the development of the graces and fruits of the Spirit cannot expect to understand the deep things of God. It is our duty and privilege, not

only to assist these brethren, but to build one another up and to strengthen one another. Let us see that we do these things.

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FORGIVE SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN

--DECEMBER 15.--`MATTHEW 18:15-35`.--

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God, for Christ's sake, forgave you."--`**Eph. 4:32**`.

TO LEARN TODAY'S lesson well means a blessing for life to every true Christian, and might be said to ensure him eternal life--so fully would he be in accord with the Divine requirements. The lesson relates specially to the consecrated, to the members of the Body of Christ, the Church, of which He is the Head, although application, of course, may be made by others with profit.

The Master's rule for His followers is, If a brother injure you, go to him alone with the matter, striving to reach an agreement, an understanding. The probability is that **misunderstanding** is all that there is of it. But if this does not suffice and you consider the matter serious enough, ask two others to accompany you to the offender, without explaining to them the mission--leave their minds free to hear the case and to advise yourself and the person injuring.

The agreement of these brethren and their advice should be followed by both. If they disagree with you, you should acknowledge that you have erred and that the matter is evidently susceptible of this construction. If they agree with you,

and your opponent refuses to heed their counsel and persists in doing you injury, and you still think it of sufficient importance to trouble the Church with the matter, you are then at liberty so to do. The Church's decision of the question is to be final, binding upon both. The one refusing to hear the Church is to be treated as an outsider, not in the sense of doing him injury, but abstaining from appointing him to any position, or honor in the Church, until his course shall be changed. How simple the Divine direction; what a blessing would come from following it!

FORGIVE "SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN"

St. Peter put a hypothetical question, of how many times a brother might trespass and ask forgiveness and

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yet be forgiven--would seven times be the limit? The Master practically declared that there could be no limit, that any brother confessing his fault and asking forgiveness must be forgiven, if it should recur four hundred and ninety times. There is no other position left; forgiveness is obligatory when asked for. We must not be too much afraid of the consequences of following the Master's direction; we must put the responsibility of the matter with Him, assured that His wisdom has not misdirected us.

Then our Lord gave a parable, to illustrate this matter, in respect to the Kingdom of Heaven class--the Church in the present embryotic condition. A certain king had a reckoning with his servants, and squared up all accounts. Amongst the others, one owed him ten thousand talents. His master commanded him to be sold, and his wife and all that he had, until the payment should be made. But the servant fell down at his master's feet and besought him

to have compassion on him and he would pay the debt. And the master had compassion on him and discontinued further prosecution on account of the debt.

"OWED HIM A HUNDRED PENCE"

The servant thus released went out and began to look up some of those who were indebted to him, and found a fellow-servant who owed **him** a hundred pence, a very insignificant sum in comparison to the one which he had owed the master. He took his fellow-servant by the throat, saying, "Pay me the hundred pence thou owest." His fellow-servant fell at his feet and besought mercy, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." But he would not delay, and cast him into prison till the debt should be paid. The matter finally reached the ears of the master, who called him and said, "Thou wicked servant! I released thee from the penalty of thy debt because thou didst entreat me! thou shouldst also have had mercy upon thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity upon thee." And he was angry, and delivered him to punishment till he should pay all that was due.

AN IMPORTANT LESSON HERE

What is the lesson? It is that we should have compassion upon one another, even as we desire that God for Christ's sake should have compassion upon us. The lesson

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is well expressed in our text. We should be kind one to another, tender-hearted--even as God also in Christ forgave us--and continues to forgive our trespasses day by day. The trespasses of others against us are trifling indeed in

comparison to our obligations to the Lord. We should therefore be very willing to forgive all who ask us--"until seventy times seven." In thus exercising mercy we will be copying the Divine character. The influence upon our hearts and lives will be ennobling. Our Lord Jesus is the express image of the Father's person, and we in copying the qualities of generosity and Love become more Christlike, and therefore more Godlike.

SO ALSO DID GOD DO UNTO YOU

Our Lord Jesus explains that His parable teaches the principles along which the Heavenly Father deals with the members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. If they are harsh and unsympathetic, if they hold their brethren to a strict account along lines of justice, then the Heavenly Father will so deal with them, and will hold them to account for all their shortcomings. It would seem that if God's people would realize the force of this lesson, the practice of forgiving the brethren of their trespasses and shortcomings would very generously and very generally be brought into play, for who of us could afford to have the Heavenly Father exact of us a full penalty for every imperfection, and refuse to remit any of the same?

We show our appreciation of God's mercy toward us by schooling ourselves in His character and becoming more and more merciful and generous toward all the Household of Faith. And if merciful toward the brethren, naturally we would be generous also toward all men. In other words, as we remember and appreciate our own weaknesses and blemishes, it will make us sympathetic with the brethren and with all mankind. And mercy, generosity, sympathy, God delights in. Such as cultivate these graces of the Spirit will be pleasing in the Lord's sight, and they will thereby be fitted and prepared to have a share with Jesus in His Throne of Glory; for that great Messianic Kingdom will be established for the very purpose of showing mercy unto thousands of mankind

who will return to Divine favor and blessing, under clearer knowledge and with the assistance that will then be afforded.

ADAM'S SIN IS NOT MEANT

We are not to understand this parable to refer to Divine forgiveness of original sin. The sin of Adam is not forgiven simply because we cry for mercy. Adam and the entire race might have called for mercy, and would have received none, except in the Divine way-- through Jesus--through faith in His blood. Nor could this forgiveness be granted until Jesus had finished His sacrifice and ascended up on high, and there appeared in the presence of God on behalf of those coming to the Father through His merit.

This parable refers entirely to subsequent sins--sins referred to in our Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." This is shown also by the fact that the parable speaks of these as servants, whereas the world, as sinners, are not God's servants, but aliens, strangers, foreigners. The only ones whom God will recognize as servants are such as have come back into relationship with Him through Jesus--through faith and consecration. It is these who are servants of God and who are required to have mercy upon their fellow-servants--upon other brethren.

Each and every one of the New Creatures, sons of God, accepted through the merit of Jesus, is held responsible for his own weaknesses; but Divine Power has provided for the cancellation of these freely for Christ's sake, upon their acknowledgment and request for forgiveness. But the forgiving of these trespasses of God's children is made dependent upon their having a spirit of forgiveness toward the brethren, for "if ye do not from the heart forgive one another's trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you." "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure" of

benevolence ye mete out to others, the same shall be meted out to you. How wonderful are the Divine arrangements! How blessed, how profitable to us, how helpful to us in our preparation for the Kingdom!

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TRULY BEAUTIFUL

Beautiful hands are they that do
The work of the noble, good and true,
Busy for them the long day through;
Beautiful faces--they that wear
The light of a pleasing spirit there,
It matters little if dark or fair;
And truly beautiful in God's sight,
Are the precious souls who love the right.

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"UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN"

--DECEMBER 22.--`ISAIAH 9:1-7`.--

**"Unto us a Child is born; unto
us a Son is given."--`Verse 6`.**

TODAY'S STUDY relates to a subject which has thrilled the civilized world for centuries --a subject which will never grow old-- a subject which, on the contrary, shall to all eternity be a theme of angels and of men. The birth of Jesus, to be rightly understood and esteemed, must be considered from the standpoint of a Gift of Love Divine. Any other view of the matter is merely the casket without the jewel. The Scriptures give us the key to the thought: "God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."--`John 3:16`.

The world was under sentence of death; mankind had been dying for more than four thousand years. God had pitied humanity from the first. Yea, before sin entered, Divine Wisdom saw the end, and would not have created man, or would not have permitted the condition which led to sin and the sentence of death, had Divine Wisdom not foreseen and arranged in advance for human Redemption.

God had purposely arranged the matter so that it would require the death of a perfect man to redeem Adam and the race which lost life in and through him. God knew from the beginning that no such perfect man could be found, because all men were of Adamic stock and had a share in Adamic weakness, imperfection and condemnation. From the beginning God in the Divine Plan contemplated that the Only Begotten of the Father, the Logos, the active Agent of Divinity in the work of Creation, should be granted the great privilege of being man's Redeemer, and thereby securing a great reward-- "Glory, honor and immortality," the Divine nature, through a resurrection from the dead.

THE FIRST STEP OF REDEMPTION

The primary step in man's recovery necessarily was that the Logos should be made **flesh** and dwell amongst us and taste death, by the grace of God, for

every man. (`John 1:14`; `Heb. 2:9`.) It is this first step that we celebrate at this season of the year--the birth of Jesus. He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be reclaimed.

Today's study points out that the ministry of Jesus would be in Galilee; that those people of the Jews who at the time were supposed to be in greatest darkness would see the great Light of Divine Truth, as represented in Jesus and His ministry. This had a primary fulfilment in Galilee, where the major portion of the mighty works of Jesus were performed. But its real fulfilment lies in the future, when the great light of the Millennial Kingdom, "the Sun of Righteousness, shall arise with healing in its beams." Before that glorious Sun, sorrow and sighing will flee away; ignorance and superstition will vanish; sin and darkness will be no more; every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. Jesus is the great Center of that Sun of Righteousness, but, as He points out, the Bride class, in process of selection during this Age, is to be with Him in the Morning, shining forth His glory. They shall sit with Him in His Throne. After the "Wheat" of this Age is gathered into the "garner" by the power of the First Resurrection, the Bride of Christ will shine forth with the Bridegroom, to heal earth's sorrows and to scatter earth's night. (`Matt. 13:43`.) All this will come to us because "unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;" because "the Government shall rest upon His shoulders"; because "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty, Mighty One, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

THE FALL OF BABYLON

We are to understand `verses 3 to 5` as referring, not to Natural Israel, but to Spiritual Israel--nominal. The holy nation has phenomenally increased without increasing the joy. There are many false children in the nominal family of God; there are many "tares" in the wheatfield. But in the Harvest time of this Age

there will be a joy; the faithful "will rejoice as they that divide the spoil." The burdensome yoke of the creedal superstitions will be broken, and the rod of the oppressor, Satan, will be broken as in the day of Midian, when Gideon with his little band put to flight the army of the Midianites and set the people free. `Verse 5` intimates that the fall of Babylon and the breaking of the yoke and the rod will be in the great "time of trouble." "For all the armor of the armed men and the turmoil and the garments rolled in blood shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire."

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MESSIAH'S MANY TITLES

Our great Redeemer, highly exalted, is eventually to bear many titles in commemoration of the many wonderful Offices He will fill and services He will accomplish. But these are yet future. His great work in the past, the Redemption work, was the foundation of all His future work. On account of His faithfulness He will have a right to assume these various Offices and use these various powers; and as each comes into exercise it will be used by Jesus. The right to govern the world is His since He died on our behalf, but He awaits the Father's time for taking to Himself His glorious power to reign; and the Government must come to Him before He can begin to fulfil the various titles.

First of all, His revelation to the world will be as the Wonderful One, the embodiment, the Expression, of Divine Justice, Divine Love, Divine Wisdom and Divine Power. As yet the world knoweth Him not. He will be revealed to mankind "in flaming fire" in the time of trouble, and subsequently, in the rescue work of His Millennial Kingdom.

He will be the world's Counselor, to give assistance, guidance, direction,

whereby they may return through Restitution into harmony with Jehovah and to the enjoyment of the blessings provided through Redemption. As the Head of the Church He has been her Counselor, but our text refers to Him as the Great King or Governor of the world, and as the world's Instructor, the Great Prophet, or Teacher, whom God promised through Moses.

His title, The Mighty God, or Mighty, Mighty One, will be recognized then, on earth, as well as in Heaven-- "that Him hath God set forth to be a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance and remission of sins to Israel," and "to all that are afar off."--`Acts 5:31`; `2:39`.

The title, The Everlasting Father, will apply to Him as the Life-Giver of the world, during the thousand years of His reign. In all that time He will be giving "life more abundant" to mankind--everlasting life to all who will obey Him--therefore His title, The Everlasting Father, or the Father who will give everlasting life to humanity. All the world of mankind, regenerated on the human plane, will obtain their right to everlasting life as human beings in an earthly Paradise from their Redeemer, who will then be their King. Not so the Church, for Jesus is not the Church's Everlasting Father. On the contrary, St. Peter declares "The God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ hath begotten **us** again to a hope of life."

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His title, The Prince of Peace, will not apply to Him at the beginning of His reign, when He will be breaking in pieces as a potter's vessel every human system out of accord with the Divine standards (`Rev. 2:27`; `Psa. 2:9`), but true peace shall speedily be established, and He shall be known as The Prince of Peace, and One whose reign will be undisputed and unmolested. "Of the increase of His Government and of peace there shall be no end"; there will be

no rebellion; His Kingdom will not pass away. When His reign shall terminate finally, at the close of the thousand years, it will be because "He will deliver the Kingdom over to God, even the Father," that **He** may be the Great All in All.

"UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID"

Messiah's Kingdom is styled "the Throne of David" for two reasons: first, the name David signifies **Beloved,** and the Messiah, as the Beloved of God, of the Father, is the Antitype of David, even as Messiah's Kingdom will be the Antitype of David's kingdom. David merely "sat upon the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord"; it was not his. So the Greater than David will sit upon the Throne of the Kingdom of Jehovah, to order it and to establish it to completion, during the thousand years of His reign. Then He will deliver it up. "The zeal (love) of Jehovah of Hosts will perform this," operating through Messiah.

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KNOW OF THE DOCTRINE

--DECEMBER 29.--`JOHN 7:17`.--

"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."--`**John 7:17**`.

WE are living in a day when the very word **doctrine** seems to be offensive to the majority of Christian people. Each denomination realizes that its own

system of doctrines is imperfect, unsatisfactory, undefendable. And the same is believed in respect to all other doctrines. Hence by mutual consent Christian people seem disposed to henceforth and forever ignore doctrines; for they believe that, if after nineteen centuries they are thus confused, the matter never was clear and never will be clear to anybody.

All this is a great mistake; the doctrines of Christ, as presented by the Great Teacher and His Apostles, was a great message, of which none of them were ashamed. The difficulty with the Lord's people today is that we gradually fell away from those doctrines--we gradually put darkness for light and light for darkness, and thus gradually got into the spirit of Babylon, and into the spirit of bondage to human traditions and creeds. Instead of shunning doctrines, we should realize that they are the very things needed to cause the scattering of our darkness and superstitions, and to draw all of God's people nearer together.

The doctrines of Christ and the Apostles is what we need to inspire us to break down all our creed fences, which so long have separated us as God's people, the one from the other, in various denominational folds, all of which are contrary to the Divine arrangement; for

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God has but the one fold for all His "sheep" of this Age, as He will have another fold for the Restitution "sheep" of the next Age--the Messianic Kingdom Age.

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM"

Can we doubt that if as God's people we put away sectarianism and the creed spectacles of our forefathers, and if we go with pure, sincere hearts to the Lord

and His Word, we will there find again the "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father over all, and one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," and "one Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in heaven"? (`Eph. 4:5,6`; `Heb. 12:23`.) Let us hearken to the words: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward," "But remember the former days, in which, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and by afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." (`Heb. 10:35,32,33,36`.)

The time seems long to all of us, even though we remember that "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years." When we think of the fact that it is thirty-nine hundred years since God's promise to Abraham, that his Seed should bless all the families of the earth--when we think of the fact that Israel did not receive that great privilege of being the spiritual Seed from which primarily that blessing should go forth, and that the "elect" are receiving it; when we think of the fact that God has been nearly nineteen centuries in selecting the "elect" from Israel and from all nations, it is enough to stagger our faith unless we hold firmly to the Divine promise and remember that God confirmed it with an Oath. By these two immutable, unchangeable things, the Divine Word and the Divine Oath, we know that the Seed of Abraham is to be developed, and that eventually it is to bless all the families of the earth. It is the Divine will that we allow our faith in this great promise of God to be "an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil."--`Heb. 6:19`.

THE DOCTRINES OF CHRIST

What we all need as God's people is to put away human theories and other gospels and take hold afresh on the Gospel of Christ. These other gospels are

other messages of hope, aside from the one which the Bible presents. For instance, Theosophy is one of these; Evolution is another; New Theology is another. These all hold out a different gospel from that which Jesus and the Apostles presented; the one that was given to us for our sanctification, and through the holding fast of which, and the obedience to The Faith, we are to be saved and given a share with Messiah in His glorious Empire of the world.

The doctrines of Christ mean those doctrines presented in the Bible by Jesus and His mouthpieces, the Apostles. These doctrines relate to the Church and to the world, and God's blessing for each; these doctrines relate to sin and its forgiveness; the terms of that forgiveness, the basis of that forgiveness--the death of Jesus--and the hope of that forgiveness, release from Divine condemnation, fellowship with God, and everlasting life obtained through resurrection of the dead.

A PREREQUISITE TO KNOWLEDGE

But some one will inquire, Why is it so difficult to understand the doctrines of Christ? Why are there six hundred different denominations of Christians? Why do they all so misunderstand the matter--that these different denominations have resulted from the differences of

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theory respecting the teachings of the Bible? The simple explanation is that, shortly after the death of the Apostles when the Church began to be in a measure of prosperity, the Adversary came in and sowed the seeds of false doctrines, using human lips and human pens in his service, through pride and ambition. The darkness became so great that, looking back today, we speak of the period as the "Dark Ages."

The various denominations of Christendom are evidences of honesty, perseverance and love of the Truth, because our forefathers, who made these creeds, were each trying to get more and more out of the dark and back to the "True Light." They all made the mistake, however, of holding too much to the creeds and theories of the past. Let us not make the same mistake; let us cut loose entirely from every authority outside the Word of God. Whoever can help us understand God's Word --we should be glad to have his assistance; but we cannot acknowledge as inspired or authoritative the teachings of the "Fathers" of the early times, however conscientious they may have been, because we cannot recognize that there were any such authorized successors to the Apostles.

God, who foretold through the Prophets this long period of darkness, and who has blessed and guided His saintly children throughout it, without removing all of their blindness, has promised that with the end of this Age will come a great blessing and enlightenment upon His people, when the "wise virgins" will find their lamps burning brightly, and be able to understand and appreciate the deep things of God: "The wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand." In the end of this Age the curtain was to be drawn, and the "true light" was to shine forth, scattering all the darkness. We are in the dawning of this New Age today, and therefore may see much more clearly than did our forefathers, the Divine character and Plan for human salvation.

WILLETH TO DO HIS WILL

Today's study is a message from the Master's own lips. He gives us the key to a clear knowledge of His doctrines, namely, that the student must be fully consecrated to God and fully desirous of knowing His Will and His Plan. In order to see light in God's light--to see the Truth, from the Divine standpoint of

the Divine revelation, we must draw near to God in the spirit of our minds, consecrated in our heart. We must will to do His will.

But what does this mean? What is it to will to do His will? God's will represents actual perfection of thought and word and deed, toward God, toward our fellows in the Body of Christ, and toward all mankind. This is the Divine Standard set up, but we are no more able to fulfil its demands than were the Jews. As St. Paul declares, "We cannot do the things that we would." Weakness of the flesh, frailty and imperfection, we all have with the world; the best that we can do is to **will** to do right, and to the best of our ability carry out that covenant with the Lord to do His will. At the very best all will come short of perfection.

But for those who have come into harmony with God, through Christ--for those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice--for those who have Jesus for their Advocate, a provision has been made, whereby the willing, all desiring to do the Divine will, and manifesting endeavors so to do, are counted as righteous--as though they did the Divine will perfectly. This class, in the Scriptures, is known as the "saints"; they are the prospective members of the Body of Christ. It is to these that the promises of our text apply, that they shall know to do the Divine will, shall know whether Jesus merely made up these teachings of Himself, or whether He was the active agent of Jehovah in what He did and in what He taught.

At the close of the year, and on the threshhold of another, shall we not determine to give our hearts, our wills, fully to the Lord--determine in our wills to do God's will? If so, following the instructions of the Word of God during the coming year, we shall doubtless be blessed and enabled fully to know, to appreciate, to understand, the doctrines of Christ--the deep things of God, which are revealed to this class by the Spirit of God.

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TWO YEARS MORE

Two years more, and I shall see Him, whom not having
seen I love, This grand prospect, daily, hourly, holds my heart on things
above; Now by faith, I'm pressing onward in the footsteps of my
Lord, Rough the pathway, steep and narrow, 'tis the path my Master
trod.

Oh, the rapture of that meeting, Oh, what ecstasy 'twill
bring, When with open, perfect vision I shall gaze upon my King! I shall feast upon the beauty of the One I love so well, And with tongue no longer stammering, all my love for Him
I'll tell.

Two years, and I'll see the Father, when the Son with loving
pride, Shall conduct me to His presence, with the rest of His dear
Bride. What a sense of awe will fill me, as with unveiled face I
gaze On that grand and mighty Being, whom all Heaven unites to
praise!

Shall I know myself, I wonder, when He takes me to His
heart, And of all that heavenly glory I shall find myself a part? Heaven not complete without me, mine, eternities of bliss? Oh, my soul, thou must not stagger, for thy God hath
promised this!

Oft a secret fear assails me, that I may be left behind; Then I bid my soul take courage, 'tis that Enemy of mine! He would use to cause my downfall censure sharp, or
flattering breath, For he hates God's holy children with a hatred strong as
death.

But my Father will not leave me to his mercy, but prepare Heavenly armor to protect me, which, if I will always wear, Every fight will prove me victor, as I wield the two-edged
Sword, World and flesh and powers of evil, all must fall before His
Word!

Oh, my soul, thy life dependeth on thy faithfulness alone; While the days and hours are passing, art thou holding fast
thy crown? Keep this thought before thee always, let it daily strengthen
thee, **"Two years more decides forever thine eternal destiny!"**

Then the thought, Oh! how it thrills me, any day He may
send word-- "Child, thy work on earth is finished, enter into thy reward." But, if I need further testings, crosses heavy, trial sore, I can wait, **for at the longest, it is only two years more!**
--Unknown.

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INTERESTING QUESTIONS

CAN ANY OF THE GREAT COMPANY BE OF THE RESTITUTION CLASS?

Question.--Can any of the Great Company become members of the Restitution class?

Answer.--We understand that the terms under which any are begotten of the Holy Spirit are that they renounce, give up, the human nature. When God accepts their consecration and takes such into Covenant relationship with Himself, He indicates that relationship by begetting them of the Holy Spirit. The only class into which these can come for future life is that of spirit or heavenly beings. If they live up to all the terms and conditions of their sacrifice, then they will have the very fullest blessing which God has provided for the loyal and to which He has called them. But for those who fail to live up to the highest standard--that of walking in the footsteps of Jesus--the arrangement seems to be that they shall at least prove themselves loyal, even if not to the same degree as their brethren.

This loyalty will be tested in the great time of trouble through which the Great Company will go. Then if they fail to prove their loyalty, apparently they will lose that life in the Second Death. But if they give up the earthly life and manifest loyalty to the Lord, even though they may never give it up willingly, but merely when brought to straits, then they will have life on the spirit plane.

The merit of Christ, which has been under embargo, as it were, must all be released before the Restitution work can begin. In other words, the Little Flock must have been "changed" and the Great Company must have suffered destruction of the flesh, before the merit can again be free in the hands of Justice, ready to be given to the world in Restitution.

Therefore, our answer would be, We cannot expect the Spirit-begotten ones to pass through the time of trouble in the end of this Age and to live on during the Millennial Age; for they belong to the Church of the First-borns, all of whom must be born before the after-borns can be brought forth. The after-borns will be the world in the Restitution.

FIFTH SUNDAY CONVENTIONS

Question.--Are Fifth Sunday Conventions advantageous?

Answer.--We are perplexed how to answer this question, and must leave the answering of it to each Class for itself, without any particular advice even. From some we have heard good reports with blessings secured. From others we have had reports to the contrary. Those who have had practical experience with these Conventions should decide for themselves. We have had no experience in this direction.

HOW TREAT "THE MENACE"

Question.--How should the WATCH TOWER readers treat **"The Menace?"**

Answer.--This is a free country and everyone has a right to follow that course which he believes will be most to the Lord's glory and most to the advancement and the good of his fellow-men. The Editor of **"The Menace"** is merely exercising his rights. As for the WATCH TOWER, it pursues a different course without criticizing others. Perhaps the Lord may have a work for **"The**

Menace" for all we know. Our judgment is that His work for us is in a different direction and we exhort all the WATCH TOWER readers to reserve all their might and physical strength for the promulgation of the Truth as the Lord has been granting us to see it within the last forty years in the WATCH TOWER. It is our mission to preach the Word--the Gospel of the Kingdom. We cannot do all that we would in this direction, and hence have no time to devote to other matters, political, social, etc.

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INTERESTING LETTERS

DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER AND PASTOR:--

I have read for the second time the article in the October 1, 1912, TOWER, "Fight the Good Fight," and how it thrills my heart to renewed zeal and determination to fight the good fight, realizing more than ever that I fight for myself, through the power of Jesus. I shall keep the TOWER in my desk ready for re-reading at spare moments.

My heart goes out in gratitude to our dear Father, and to our Savior and Advocate for these wonderful helps that come as refreshing and energizing dew drops upon our thirsting souls. The Truth is new and fresh every morning and evening. It is even more precious to me now than when I first saw it, nineteen years ago.

How sweet the words of the poet sound in my heart: "There's no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than up in heaven; There's no place where earthly

failings have such kindly judgment given. Search the Scriptures, search and see, God in mercy judgeth thee."

I had occasion to speak to a vessel captain today, who to a certain extent is interested in the harvest work, telling him about the many blessings we received at the Washington Convention, and the profitable and pleasant visit to the Tabernacle and Bethel. He said: "You certainly are at peace with all mankind, if I can judge by your face."

Our earnest prayers go up for you daily, that the God of all grace may be your strength till the work is finished, come what may.

Sweetest Christian greetings and remembrances from the writer and family, in which, I am sure, every member of our dear Ecclesia joins.

Yours, by His grace, N. A. LINDERBERG.--**Minn.**

DEAR BRETHREN:--

I am enclosing two clippings from prominent church papers which will be self-explanatory. I wish to say that I think one of the best features about the WATCH TOWER is its indifference to the ranting of other publications. I feel almost to rejoice in this fact every time I receive the TOWER; I can sit down and really read the explanation of the Holy Scriptures and the discussion of topics without having to read every few lines some one's personal slashing of another person's belief; or by turning a page run on to a $3.00 watch advertisement guaranteeing a watch for twenty years; or a minister's boosting of the last Holiness meeting at which he and John Doe were the prominent

speakers, and Mr. _____ the singer, that so many "prayed through, many were gloriously blessed, and that he, the writer, had a few open dates, and if any of the dear brethren wanted him, to write **at once."**

Yet I do believe that some of these articles should be answered, not by retorting, but by telling your readers some of the things accomplished: for instance, in one article which you will find underscored, the writer says, "But Russell's teachings have not produced even reformations." Why would it not be well to reprint both these articles with such comment as is your custom to make in a religious way, with only the one thought in view, that of shedding light on these benighted souls, that their vision may be gloriously enlarged, so they may be able to see beyond the confines of the small circle in which their thoughts have been accustomed to move, and realize the truth of the fact that they are servants of a dogma, the charms of which have so veiled their vision, that nothing but an almost divine interference can accomplish the feat of awakening their soul to the more lovable nature of the God of Love, who could not possibly be a God of Love were He a God of the Hell Fire punishment which they have been standing for.

May God add His blessing.
S. R. G_____.--**Dakota.**

Brother Russell's replies to Mr. Ellis he thinks best to incorporate in his discourses, which appear in many newspapers and reach many people.

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